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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2016  
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SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN CONCERNS ABOUT MNF-I DETENTION OF  
SUSPECTED WEAPONS DEALER

REF: PILZ-EPSTEIN E-MAIL MAY 25 2006

Classified By: Political-Military Counselor David C. Litt for  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) On May 24, Australian Ambassador Howard Brown and Australian Consul Alan Elliot met with Pol-MilCouns and MNF-I Deputy Commanding General - Detainee Operations (DCG-DO) to express Canberra's concern about the detention of Australian national Bradley John Thompson by US military forces as a security internee. Ambassador Brown provided Post with a paper copy of his aide memoire, which we scanned and e-mailed to NEA/I/PM as per Ref A.

12. (S) Mr. Thompson was detained in Baghdad on May 16 following a joint Iraqi Police Service (IPS) and Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) investigation found evidence that Mr. Thompson had been smuggling weapons into the International Zone in hidden compartments of vehicles and selling those weapons illegally to customers possibly including Jaish al-Mahdi militia members and insurgents operating in Fallujah.

13. (S) A search of Mr. Thompson's villa (located inside the International Zone) at the time of his detention found twenty AK-47 automatic rifles, three Russian belt-fed tank-type heavy machine guns, a sizeable quantity of ammunition, Iraqi, Australian, and US military uniforms, computer software used to create false military identification badges, and \$128,000 USD cash.

14. (S) Prior to our meeting with the Australian Ambassador, Post and MNF-I had made arrangements on May 21 for the Australian Consul to visit Mr. Thompson at the Camp Cropper detention facility. According to the Consul, Alan Elliott, Mr. Thompson claims that he was "authorized by MNF-I" to sell weapons and ammunition and buy military uniforms. (NOTE: MNF-I is not aware of any such authorization.)

15. (C) As well as expressing general concern with regard to Mr. Thompson's legal status, Ambassador Brown requested that Mr. Thompson not be blindfolded and shackled when being moved to and from visiting

rooms. (NOTE: this is standard procedure for new inmates at Camp Cropper, which houses highly-violent insurgent actors as well as other special populations meriting private cells, like female and Coalition nationals.) The DCG-DO agreed.

¶16. (SBU) According to Ambassador Brown, Mr. Thompson has retained a US attorney, LtCol (Ret.) Neal A. Puckett, USMC, to represent him. The DCG-DO confirmed that LtCol Puckett would be allowed to meet with Mr. Thompson either at Camp Cropper or (if preferred) at an Iraqi courthouse inside the International Zone. Requests for continued Consular telephone and in-person access to Mr. Thompson were also granted.

¶17. (SBU) In response to follow-up e-mails from the Australian Consul on May 26, Post arranged for Mr. Thompson to telephone Mr. Elliott's cell phone and Mr. Thompson's sister in Australia, assured Mr. Elliott that he would be permitted to visit Mr. Thompson prior to any future appearance in Iraqi court, and provided contact information for Mr. Thompson's American legal counsel to make visiting arrangements.

¶18. (C) COMMENT: The one previous instance of US military detention of an Australian national in Iraq, Ahmed Aziz Rafiq (Iraqi-born), attracted significant attention from the Australian press corps. The Australian Ambassador noted that he expected a similar reaction in this case; Post notes that this will be magnified should Mr. Thompson, as seems not unlikely, be criminally charged in an Iraqi court. END COMMENT.  
KHALILZAD